The Everson Museum of Art, where I serve as curator, hosted a legendary series of juried ceramic competitions between 1932 and 1972. Each Ceramic National exhibition traveled to as many as twelve different museums and galleries, giving the public a glimpse into a vibrant field, and providing a platform for talented artists. The Ceramic Nationals ended in 1972, in part because the field of ceramics had expanded to include conceptual and experimental works. How could a juror begin to judge an exquisitely crafted handmade pot against a work made of unfired clay or pre-fabricated kiln bricks?

Surely, you see my dilemma. I was delighted to open the nearly 500 submissions to The Center for Contemporary Art’s 2019 International Juried Ceramics Exhibition to find works that encompass the mind-boggling spectrum of work that makes up today’s field. I was delighted to see work by established artists, as well as younger artists who are just starting their journey. To narrow the submissions to just fifty-one works was painful, but ultimately, this exhibition bristles with the energy that keeps me engaged and committed to ceramics as a discipline.

My thanks go out to The Center for Contemporary Art and its donors, but also to the artists who continue to put themselves out there. I see you. Thank you for continuing to push forward and make my job both difficult and rewarding.

Garth Johnson
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